

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Now amended) A method of detecting a *Plasmodium* malarial agent of humans in a biological sample comprising contacting a probe or primer of the *Plasmodium berghei* extrachromosomal genetic element with said sample or a nucleic acid derived therefrom for a time and under conditions sufficient for hybridisation to occur and then detecting said hybridisation using a detection means, wherein the probe or primer is at least 15 nucleotides in length and comprises ~~a nucleotide sequence~~ a large subunit (LSU) rRNA gene or gene fragment that is highly conserved in *Plasmodium berghei* and said malarial agent of humans, wherein said gene or gene fragment comprises a *P. berghei* nucleotide sequence set forth in nucleotides 1147 to 1740 of SEQ ID NO:1 or a complementary nucleotide sequence thereto.
2. (Now canceled)
3. (Now canceled)
4. (Now canceled)
5. (Now amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the hybridisation step is performed under low stringency hybridisation conditions.
6. (Previously amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the hybridisation step is performed under moderate stringency hybridisation conditions.

7. (Previously amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the hybridisation step is performed under high stringency hybridisation conditions.
8. (Now amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the detection means used to detect the hybridisation comprises identifying a signal produced by a reporter molecule bound to the probe or primer, wherein the reporter molecule ~~is capable of producing~~ produces an identifiable signal.
9. (Now amended) The method according to claim 8 wherein the reporter molecule is a radioisotope or a non-isotopic reporter molecule ~~such as biotin~~.
10. (Now amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the detection means comprises a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) format ~~using one or more *Plasmodium* genus-specific primers or primer pairs~~.
11. (Original) The method according to claim 10 wherein the PCR format comprises RT-PCR.
12. (Now canceled)
13. (Now amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the *Plasmodium* malarial agent of humans is selected from the group list consisting of *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Plasmodium vivax*, *Plasmodium ovale* and *Plasmodium malariae*.
14. (Previously amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the biological sample comprises blood or a derivative thereof.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 14 wherein the biological sample comprises dried blood.

16-45. (Now canceled without prejudice)

46. (New) The method according to claim 9 wherein the non-isotopic reporter molecule is biotin.
